



## DIETARY SUPPLEMENT FACT SHEET

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Wellness.aspx>

### Yerba Mate (*Ilex Paraguariensis*)

**Also known as:** Jesuit's Brazil Tea, Jesuit's Tea, Paraguay Tea, St. Bartholemew's Tea

**Historical Perspective:** Yerba mate is a plant whose leaves are used to make medicine. Mate, also known as yerba mate, is a popular beverage, much like coffee or tea, in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina.

**Common Uses:** Yerba mate is commonly used as a stimulant to relieve mental and physical fatigue. It is also commonly used in many over-the-counter weight loss supplements due to its caffeine content and subsequent appetite suppression capabilities.

**Form(s) Used:** Yerba mate is either used as a dried leaf or as a liquid extract.

**Potential Side Effects:** Due to the caffeine content of yerba mate, side effects include difficulty sleeping (insomnia), nervousness, restlessness, stomach upset, nausea and vomiting, irregular heartbeat, and increased blood pressure. Use of yerba mate and caffeine-containing herbs/supplements as well as herbs/supplements with ephedra (Ma Huang) or citrus aurantium (Bitter Orange) can increase the risk of adverse side effects.

**Food-Drug-Supplement Interactions:** Yerba mate interferes with many prescription medications as well as over-the-counter medications.

**Contraindications to Use:** Children and pregnant or breastfeeding women should not use yerba mate. People with depression/anxiety disorders, heart conditions, hypertension, kidney disease, and ulcers should also avoid yerba mate.

**Yerba Mate can increase the side effects of many medications and supplements including :**

- 1) Asthma medications
- 2) Bitter Orange
- 3) Disulfiram (Antabuse)
- 4) Caffeine compound such as: black tea, cocoa, coffee, cola nut and green tea
- 6) Certain antibiotics (Cipro, Levaquin, and others)
- 7) Cimetidine (Tagamet)
- 8) Clozapine (Clozaril)
- 9) Ephedra (Ma Huang)
- 10) Ephedrine and/or cold medications containing decongestants (pseudoephedrine)
- 11) Estrogen (Estrace)
- 12) Guarana
- 13) Lithium (Eskalith, Lithobid)
- 14) MAO Inhibitors (Nardil, Parnate, and others). Can cause dangerously high blood pressure

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- 15) Medications for diabetes such as insulin and oral hypoglycemics (glipizide, metformin, and others)
- 16) Migraine medicines containing ergotamines (Cafergot, Migranal, and others)
- 17) Mixileline (Mexitil)
- 18) Oral Contraceptives
- 19) Riluzole (Rilutek)
- 20) Terbinafine (Lamisil)
- 21) Verapamil (Calan, Isoptin, Verelan)

**Yerba Mate decreases the side effects of many medications including:**

- 1) Sleep or anxiety medications (Valium, Ativan, Klonopin, Restoril, Serax and others).

**Research Data on Safety and Efficacy:** Due to its caffeine content, yerba mate is possibly effective when used for relief of physical and/or mental fatigue, as well as when used as an appetite suppressant in weight control. Yerba mate is possibly safe for some people when taken for short periods of time. However, when taken in large amounts for long periods of time, yerba mate is probably unsafe. Yerba mate contains 4-16% tannins, which are believed to have possible carcinogenic and liver toxicity effects. Long-term use may pose an increased risk for certain types of cancers as well as blood clots. Yerba mate is addictive. People who take mate on a regular basis may get irritable, anxious, dizzy, headaches, or exhibit other signs of withdrawal when they stop taking mate.

**Bottom-Line:** Given the increased potential for serious adverse side effects when combined with caffeine-containing compounds, bitter orange (citrus aurantium), or ephedra containing products, exercise caution when using yerba mate. Before combining yerba mate with any over-the-counter medication, herb/supplement, or prescription medication, talk with a healthcare provider, a registered dietitian or a pharmacist.

**References:**

1. McKevooy GK, ed. AHFS Drug Information. Bethesda, MD: American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, 1998.
2. Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Jeff M. Jellin, Pharm D. Therapeutic Research Facility, 2002.
3. Micromedex Healthcare Series. Englewood, CO: MICROMEDEX Inc.